

Social Media Policy of Brettonwood High School

Policy Statement

This policy of Brettonwood High School, was approved by the School Governing Body on (date to be confirmed). The policy has been drafted in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of South Africa, 1996; the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 ('SASA'); the National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996; applicable provincial legislation on school education, and the Regulation of Interception of Communications and Provision of Communication-related Information Act 70 of 2002.

The aim of this policy is to monitor and control educators, non-educators, learners and parents in their communication on school matters. This is to ensure the responsible and appropriate use of social media platforms by all individuals such that the school's good name and reputation is upheld with pride and dignity.

While, the school respects the individual privacy of educators, non-educators, learners and the parent body, it does not extend to their work-related conduct.

In terms of the Regulation of Interception of Communications and Provision of Communication-related Information Act 70 of 2002, "any person ... may intercept any communication if he or she is a party to the communication, unless such communication is intercepted by such person for purposes of committing an offence".

Brettonwood High School may therefore intercept any communication that is conveyed through the school's website or social media platforms which refers to any information regarding the school.

2. Philosophy

Brettonwood High School is committed to the highest level of conduct and ethics, and functions on the precept of the greatest integrity which ensures its success as an institution. The school acknowledges that online interaction is an essential means of communication, and that the use of social media platforms are an integral part of individual and group communication in their everyday lives. In doing so, the school encourages ethical and responsible interaction on all social media platforms.

3. Application

This policy applies to the communication of opinions and comments by educators, non-educators, parents and learners on social media platforms that may in any manner be linked to Brettonwood High School.

4. Definitions

(a) Information systems – the systems consisting of the network of all communication channels used within the school.

(b) Intercept – the acquisition of the contents of any communication, by any means, so as to make some or all of the contents of a communication available to a person other than the sender or recipient or intended recipient thereof, and includes the:

(i) monitoring of any such communication by means of a monitoring device;

(ii) viewing, examination or inspection of the contents of any indirect communication; and

(iii) diversion of any indirect communication from its intended destination to any other destination.

(c) ICT – information and communication technology.

(d) School – the School Governing Body, as well as any person to whom particular authority or functions have been delegated in terms of this policy.

(e) School management – the principal or a member of the school staff delegated by the principal.

(f) Social media – the means of interaction among people during which they create, share and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Social media can include, but is not limited to text, audio, video, images, podcasts, blogs, wikis and photo-sharing, including YouTube, Flickr and Instagram, as well as online social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Myspace and any other multimedia communications.

(g) Social media platforms – online platforms such as WhatsApp, blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, social networks, social bookmarking services, user rating services and any other online collaboration, sharing or publishing platform, whether accessed via the web, a mobile device, text messaging or any other existing and/or future communication medium.

5. Engaging in social media communication on behalf of the school

(a) Only persons who are authorised by the Principal (“authorised persons”) may engage in social media communication on behalf of Brettonwood High School.

(b) Only authorised persons may comment on any aspect of Brettonwood High School and/or any matter in which the school is involved. When making such comment, the authorised person must identify him/herself.

(c) An authorised person who uses social media communication on behalf of Brettonwood High school must promote the school's view on specific issues, and should not express views that defy or are inconsistent of those set out by the school.

(d) If an authorised person is not familiar with or is unsure of the school's position on any particular issue, he/she should seek clarity from the Principal before posting or responding to comments on any media platform.

(e) The school may instruct authorised persons to avoid certain subjects/topics, and has the right to monitor and review authorised persons' comments and submissions. The school shall take appropriate action against any person who makes comments or submissions that have not been authorised by the school.

f) Posts on all media platforms must be non-biased in nature. An individual is prohibited from posting any materials or comments that promotes or disrespects a religion, cultural, political or social organisation, race, creed social orientation, socio- economic status and disability.

6. Educators, non-educators, learners and parents using social media for official and non-official purposes should be aware of the following:

(a) The approved social media sites may only be used for official purposes when using the school's information systems.

(b) The message that the school wants to convey to other users must be clearly defined.

(c) Postings must be kept legal, ethical and respectful. (All participants are prohibited from posing harassing and threatening messages, disturbing the virtual learning platform and cyberbullying.)

(d) Educators, non-educators and learners may not engage in online communication activities that could bring the school into disrepute, and have a responsibility to avoid establishing online relationships and/or interests that could adversely influence or impair their capacity to act with integrity and objectivity in relation to the school as well as other educators, non-educators and learners. In addition, they should refrain from engaging in any social media activities that may bring the school into disrepute, and will be held accountable for any such behaviour.

(e) Personal details of educators, non-educators, learners and parents may not be disclosed.

Educators, non-educators, learners and parents should take note that the school may from time to time share photos on social media sites that were taken during official school activities.

(f) The school does not accept any responsibility or liability for weak security settings on the social media profile of any person associated with the school.

(g) If any educator, non-educator, learner or parent posts a remark, photo or video on any social media platform that may harm the reputation of the school, and affiliation to the school is identified, known or presumed, such educator, non-educator or learner will be subject to disciplinary and legal action. Legal action may be taken against a parent who jeopardises the school's reputation.

(h) All information that is published must be accurate, and confidential information may not be disclosed.

(i) Copyright laws must be adhered to (copying, pirating or downloading software and electronic files without permission is a criminal offense)

(j) Statements to the media must first be approved by the Department of Education.

k) Educators, non-educators, learners and parents are prohibited from recording any meeting, lesson or conversation without prior permission from all parties involved.

7. Policy amendments

The School Governing Body may at times, revise, supplement, modify or alter this policy.

Signed on this day of 11/12/2023

Chairperson of SGB 

School Principal 